



CITY OF CHICOPEE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Jeffrey A. Neece
Superintendent

Joseph Kietner
Chief Operator

Quinn T. Lonczak
Project Supervisor

Sewer Commission Meeting January 20, 2016

Present: Sewer Commissioners: Joseph Carriveau, Chairman
James Raschilla, Vice-Chairman
James Carabetta

Chung Liu, Excused

Also Present: Joseph Kietner, Chief Operator, WPC
Quinn Lonczak, Project Supervisor, WPC
Sarah Theroux, Clerk, WPC
Paul Laflamme of 114 Chapel Street
James Spano of 742 Grattan Street
Anthony Choquette of 41 Dale Street

Abatements:

Paul Laflamme of 114 Chapel Street is here tonight requesting an abatement for a high usage billing due to a plumbing leak that flooded the basement. Mr. Laflamme explained this property is vacant and he had discovered the basement was flooded sometime in November. He then had the Water Department shut off the water at the street so he could determine the cause of the leak. Mr. Laflamme explained the Water Department did remove the water meter once water was cleared from the basement.

Paul Laflamme – 114 Chapel Street – High Usage/Plumbing Leak – \$2,809.23, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Approved 3-0.

James Spano of 742 Grattan Street is here tonight requesting an abatement for a high usage abatement due to a toilet leak. Mr. Spano explained this property is the Aldenville Package Store and it also has an apartment above the store, although the apartment has been vacant for about five years. Mr. Spano explained his wife heard water running in the store and when she investigated she found the toilet upstairs in the apartment to be leaking. Mr. Spano had a plumber repair the toilet. The Sewer Commissioners questioned if the high usage billing in question was only for one quarter since the usage is 45,570 cubic feet which they believe is extremely high for a toilet leak. Mr. Raschilla explained he would like to table this abatement until Mr. Spano receives his next billing in March to compare usage and determine if the cause of his high usage was on this billing is in fact due to a toilet leak.

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Water Pollution Control

Aldenville Package Store – 736-742 Grattan Street – High Usage/Toilet Leak - \$2,659.64, Mr. Raschilla motioned to table the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Tabled 3-0.

Anthony Choquette of 41 Dale Street is here tonight requesting an abatement for an abnormally high usage abatement with no explainable reason. The Sewer Commission previously denied Mr. Choquette's abatement request at their August 2015 meeting and at that time advised him to track his usage and welcomed him to return to the Sewer Commission and re-apply for an abatement. Mr. Choquette explained his usage has since returned to normal but never could determine the cause of the high usage billing.

Anthony Choquette – 41 Dale Street – Unexplained High Usage - \$1,003.16, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Raschilla, Approved 3-0.

Anthony Choquette – 18-20 South Street – Interest Charges - \$11.78, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Approved 3-0.

S. Marcus – 26 Boileau Terrace – High Usage/Toilet Leak – \$84.96, Mr. Carabetta motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Raschilla, Approved 3-0.

Pablo Torres – 68-70 Cochran Street – High Usage/Toilet Leak – Requested Amount \$414.36, Recommended Amount \$0.00, Mr. Carriveau motioned to deny the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Denied 3-0.

The above abatement was denied because the usage doesn't meet the criteria as stated in the abatement policy.

Jean Derienska – 91 Watson Street – High Usage/No Reason Listed – Requested Amount \$128.00, Recommended Amount \$0.00, Mr. Carabetta motioned to deny the abatement, seconded by Mr. Raschilla, Denied 3-0.

The above abatement was denied because there was no documentation provided showing repairs have been made as well as the usage doesn't meet the criteria as stated in the abatement policy.

Norman Roy – 60 Fair Street – High Usage/Sprinkler Damage due to Sewer Separation Project – No Requested Amount, Recommended Amount \$0.00, Mr. Raschilla motioned to deny the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Denied 3-0.

The above abatement was denied because there was no documentation provided showing repairs have been made as well as the usage doesn't meet the criteria as stated in the abatement policy.

Zdislaw Zyskowski – 190 Sheridan Street – High Usage/Meter Malfunctioned – Requested Amount \$300.00, Recommended Amount \$311.27, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Approved 3-0.

Walter Labair – 16 Hyde Avenue – New Pool Liner - \$30.00, Mr. Carabetta motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Raschilla, Approved 3-0.

Ian Craik – 18-20 Call Street – Stuck Outside Register - \$885.19, Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Approved 3-0.

Mr. Raschilla motioned to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2015 meeting, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, Approved 3-0.

Commitments:

December 2015 – Sewer & Storm – \$994,323.81, Mr. Raschilla motioned to accept, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, accepted 3-0.

January 2016 – Sewer & Storm – \$1,330,106.34, Mr. Raschilla motioned to accept, seconded by Mr. Carabetta, accepted 3-0.

Sewer and Storm Fee Revenues through December 31, 2015 total \$6,470,267.27 which is \$199,067.11 less than what had been projected.

Mr. Raschilla questioned if an informational flyer could be inserted with upcoming billing cycles to inform property owners that they have the option of installing a secondary meter at their property for outside water usage where sewer usage is not charged. He would also like the flyer to include information about the thirty percent summer discount on sewer usage and the fact a property can only choose either the summer discount or the secondary meter but not both. Mr. Raschilla also questioned if the secondary meter ordinance should be updated to clearly state that a property owner has the right to choose either the summer discount or the secondary meter. Joe Kietner agreed to look into the possibility of preparing a flyer.

Mr. Raschilla also questioned what the Rain Smart Rewards Ordinance is. Joe Kietner explained the Rain Smart Rewards program was designed and put into place a few years ago to allow property owners a way to abate up to fifty percent of their annual storm water fee if they took measures to keep their storm water runoff contained to their property. Joe Kietner further explained that a property owner can install a dry well or an infiltration basin among other things to keep their storm water on site. Mr. Raschilla questioned whether this program is available to property owners at this time and if so, could the Sewer Department advertise it to the public as an informational flier inserted with the water and sewer bills or should the ordinance be taken out of the city code? Additionally, Mr. Raschilla asked if the Sewer Commission can revisit this topic with Tom Hamel at a future meeting and Joe Kietner agreed that would be a good idea.

Next, Mr. Raschilla questioned what the Storm Line Connection Fee Schedule Ordinance is and if the public knows they can connect to the storm line for a refundable fee of \$250.00? Joe Kietner explained this ordinance was mainly created for sewer separation project areas where properties, that are identified to their have storm water directly connected to the sewer system, are required to connect to the storm water drain line.

These properties are identified by engineers designing the sewer separation projects and an inspection of the property's storm water system is conducted, if needed the city will install a storm water connection for a fee of \$250.00. Once the property owner connects their storm water system to the city's drain line, the \$250.00 fee is refunded. Joe Kietner further explained the City pays the contractor a fee for each storm water connection installed at a property line during the construction phase of a sewer separation project. So, if a property owner needs a storm water connection and is ready to have the necessary plumbing work completed, the contractor will install a storm water stub at their property line and the property owner can then hook their storm water system into it and the City will not charge them. However, if a property owner decides they want a storm water connection stub for future plans but never connects to it, they will be charged the \$250.00 connection fee.

Mr. Carabetta questioned what the outcome was with the Water Department reviewing the Sewer Treatment Plant's high usage water bills and request for abatements. Joe Kietner explained that Tom Hamel attended the Water Commission's January meeting to explain the abatement request and the Sewer Treatment Plant's plan to switch over to using non-potable water generated at the treatment plant, which will significantly reduce the amount of water used from the Water Department. The treatment plant will still use potable water from the Water Department for some parts of the treatment plant. Joe Kietner informed the Sewer Commissioners the Water Commission didn't vote on the abatement at their January meeting but the Sewer Department will attend their February meeting to discuss it further.

Quinn Lonczak informed the Sewer Commissioners that he spoke with a resident over the phone today who asked to pass along her unhappiness with the high sewer rates.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24, 2016 at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Raschilla motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 P.M., seconded by Mr. Carabetta, adjourned 3 - 0.

Accepted	
Vote	<u>3</u> - <u>0</u>
Date	<u>2/24/16</u>

Copies: Mayor
City Council
City Clerk
DPW Superintendent